one!' The fertility with which he endows mankind through the male becomes a triumph of life over death, promising eternal life to those who accept his 'life-giving water'. This is the supreme mystery: 'I am the resurrection and the life . . . and whoever believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' In other mystery religions of the ancient Near East there are a number of fertility gods who assume human form and are treacherously killed by adversaries, only to rise from death and bring life again to the world.

The conclusion is inescapable: the composite Jesus of Paul who was betrayed and died on the cross, then rose from death to bring salvation to the world, was none other than the Arabian god Jesus. The risen 'Lord' of the Gospels was the same person. The historical Bar Nagara died on the cross in Jerusalem, and that was the end of his story. It was as the god Jesus that he rose from the tomb.

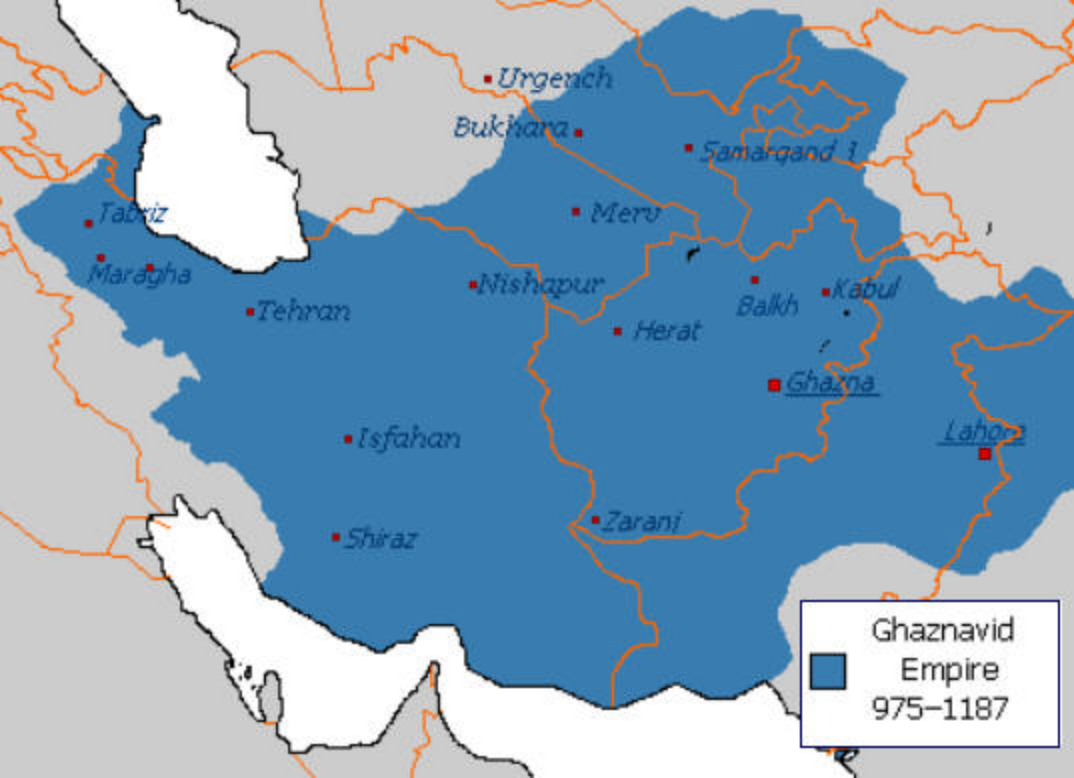
Apart from his ability to give 'eternal life' to those who received his 'life-giving water', Al Issa also had the *Power* to redeem the dead: 'Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies!' In this particular capacity, he must have also been worshipped under the attested name of Dhu Khulasah, the 'God of Redemption'. In the early seventh century, the worship of Dhu Khulasah was still popular in some Arabian regions; its principal sanctuary was somewhere south of Mecca – the famous *al-Ka'bah al-Yamaniyah* (the 'Southern Kaaba'), rivalling that of Mecca, and believed to have been located in Tubalah, in inland Asir. After the triumph of Islam, Muhammad, we are told, sent a party of his followers to destroy the idol of Dhu Khulasah which stood there – a sculpture of white stone depicting a phallus topped by a crown. The cult of Dhu Khulasah, however, was subsequently resurrected in the region, where it survived until 1815. In that year, the Wahhabis organized a special military campaign to suppress remnants of pagan worship in different parts of Asir, and the reconstructed idol of Dhu Khulasah in his original Kaaba of Tubalah was destroyed by gunfire.

The original, sophisticated fusion between the historical Bar Nagara and the mythological Al Issa, or Dhu Khalasah, must have been the work of Paul. Having been raised as a strict Jew, Paul was initially repelled by the claim of Bar Nagara's

KAMAL S. SALIBI

WHO WAS JESUS?

CONSPIRACY IN JERUSALEM

TPP

Urgench
Bukhara
Samarqand
Tabriz
Maragha
Merv
Nishapur
Balkh
Kabul
Tehran
Herat
Ghazna
Lahore
Isfahan
Zarani
Shiraz
Ghaznavid
Empire
975–1187

11. And do thou, Joshua (the son of) Nun, keep these words and this book; 12. For from my death—(my) assumption—until His advent there will be CCL times. 13. And this is their course

defective. The context points to Israel's enemies being in torments; for Israel rejoices over the plight of the latter. They are, moreover, in sight of Israel. These two facts at once suggest the thought of Gehenna here, and that the original was בני הנם. But הנם was lost and בני rendered ἐν γῇ, and this in turn by in terram. בני בניהנם is twice rendered ἐν γῇ Βεεννόμ in 2 Chron. xxviii. 3 and in xxxiii. 6. γῇ or γαί is likewise merely גיא or גֵּי transliterated in Josh. xviii. 16; 1 Sam. xiii. 18; 1 Chron. iv. 14; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6; Ezek. xxxix. 11, 15; Eth. En. xxvii. 2.

Hence I take the true text to be, "Thou wilt see thy enemies in Gehenna, and thou wilt recognise them and rejoice." This portrays faithfully the expectations of the Jews as to the future life. In early times (Isa. lxvi. 24; Eth. En. xxvii. 2, 3, liv. 1, 2, xc. 26, 27) Gehenna was regarded as the place of punishment for faithless Jews, who should there suffer in the presence of the righteous; but in N.T. times it had become the future abode of the wicked generally, who were to be tormented within view of the blessed. Cf. 4 Ezra vii. 36, Et apparebit locus tormenti, et contra illum erit locus requietionis; clibanus gehennae ostendetur, et contra eum jucunditatis paradisus.

Recognise them, etc. If both Israel and their enemies were on earth, and Israel had just triumphed over the latter, this statement would be absurd. But if they are respectively in heaven and gehenna, the recognition is full of point, and just cause for rejoicing.

11. *This book.* Cf. I. 16, XI. 1.

12. *My death — (my) assumption.* The word "assumption" was not in the original here, which told only of Moses' death. Cf. ver. 14 and I. 15. It was introduced by the final editor, who combined in one work the two distinct books, "The Testament of Moses" and "The Assumption of Moses." Our present book is what survives of "The Testament of Moses," which knew nothing of Moses' "Assumption."

His Advent, *i.e.* God's advent for judgment.

CCL times. Each "time" = 7 years, or a year-week. Thus 250 times = 1750 years. Hence from the creation (see I. 2) to the final judgment was to be a period of 4250 years, or 85 jubilees. This estimate is found elsewhere, I think, only in Sanhedrin 97*b*; but there the goal is the coming of the Messiah.

14. *I shall go to sleep*, etc. Moses here looks forward to an ordinary death, and to joining his fathers in Sheol, as also in I. 15 (see note) and X. 12 (note).

The Assumption of Moses

R. H. Charles

Countries that have been under European control